



State of Rhode Island  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
Shepard Building  
255 Westminister Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Enclosure 6a  
September 14, 2021

Angélica Infante-Green  
Commissioner

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**TO:** Members of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education

**FROM:** Angélica Infante-Green, Commissioner

**RE: Approval of Members for the Rhode Island Vision Education Services Program (RIVESP) Advisory Board**

The Advisory Board for the Rhode Island Vision Education Services Program (RIVESP) serves to advise the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Rhode Island General Law §16-26.1 on the education of children in our state who are blind or visually impaired. The Advisory Board is composed of eleven members, of which not less than six will be persons or the parents of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

The RIGL 16-26.1-2. Under, Advisory Board, requires the following:

- (a) The powers delegated and authorized in this chapter for the board of regents for elementary and secondary education and the department of elementary and secondary education shall be in addition to those previously authorized by any other general or public law.
- (b) The governance, funding, and programming of the Rhode Island Vision Education and Services Program (hereinafter referred to as RIVESP) shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations formulated by the board of regents for elementary and secondary education pursuant to chapter 35 of title 42.
- (c) The board of regents for elementary and secondary education shall appoint the members of the advisory board from nominations made by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education. The chairperson shall also be selected in this manner. The board of regents for elementary and secondary education shall determine the qualifications and terms of office of members of the board of trustees. The advisory board shall be comprised of eleven (11) individuals, not less than six (6) of whom shall be persons or parents of persons who are blind and visually impaired. The commissioner may seek input on nominations of persons or parents, guardians of persons who are blind and visually impaired from organizations whose membership is primarily made up of parents of blind and visually impaired individuals, individuals who are blind and visually impaired, or organizations whose purpose is advocacy for individuals who are blind and visually impaired, as well as from other sources. For purposes of obtaining

input from diverse sources regarding suggestions for nominations for the first advisory board to be nominated by the commissioner, the commissioner shall convene a public forum to obtain broad input prior to making the initial nominations for the founding membership on the advisory board. No person in any way employed by or doing business for monetary gain with the RIVESP shall be eligible for appointment to the board. The departments of education, health, human services, and the RIVESP shall serve ex-officio and be nonvoting members.

(d) The board of regents shall establish strategic directions for the education of blind and visually impaired children in the state of Rhode Island.

(e) The board of regents shall provide parameters for budget requests, recommend a budget, and participate in budget development.

(f) The commissioner of elementary and secondary education shall recommend parameters for the overall budget requests, recommend a budget, and participate in budget development.

(g) The advisory board shall meet not less than quarterly and serve without compensation. Five (5) members of the advisory board shall be required for quorums. They shall keep records of their meetings and report annually on the educational progress of the Rhode Island vision and educational services program to the commissioner, board of regents and the general assembly, and state library.

(h) The advisory board shall recommend to the RIVESP:

(1) The needs of the blind and visually impaired children in the state of Rhode Island;

(2) The educational and service policies required to meet the needs of blind and visually impaired children served by the RIVESP;

(3) Policy guidance and suggestions for budget development;

(4) Methods which ensure that all students are taught by educators of the highest possible quality;

(5) Appropriate committees and/or workgroups as needed, to provide guidance and feedback on the goals and outcomes of the RIVESP;

(6) Make themselves available to the board of regents, departments of education, health, human services and to the RIVESP in order to provide a link between these agencies. The advisory board shall utilize as a guiding document to advise policy, and annually update, the "Special House Commission to Promote and Develop a Comprehensive System of Education for Visually Impaired Children, The Final Report, November 2005"; and

(7) The educational policies to meet the needs of the blind and visually impaired children and to advise on implementation of policies established by the board of regents, and the RIVESP.

The current and returning eight members recommended for the RIVESP Advisory Board are:

- **Paul Troxell, Chairperson**
- **Joann Alger**
- **Chris Butler**
- **Kelly Charlebois**
- **Lisa Colwell**
- **Molly Faerber**
- **Nikki McPeak**
- **William Potter**

Candidate applications for the three remaining vacancies are currently under review and will be presented to the Council at a later date.

**RECOMMENDATION: THAT the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education approves the appointment of the Advisory Board for the Rhode Island Vision Education Services Program (RIVESP), as presented.**